

Tales From The Bar Side – Don't mess with Smokey

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BY VINCENT P. FORNIAS



Just as you hunker down, wallet in hand, to deal with the annual April fund-the-feds rite, consider where your hard-earned money is being spent. Credit is given to our own John McLindon for this eye-opening discovery, right in the dust-covered pages of the U.S. Code. Specifically, we call our dedicated reader(s) to 18 U.S.C. § 711-713:

Sec. 711—“Whoever . . . knowingly and for profit manufactures, reproduces, or uses the character ‘Smokey Bear’ . . . or any facsimile thereof, or the name ‘Smokey Bear’ shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.”

Sec. 711a—Same penalties for “Woodsy Owl,” or the associated slogan, “Give a Hoot, Don’t Pollute.”

Sec. 713—Same penalties for the great seal of the United States, or the seals of The President or the Vice President of the United States, or the seal of the United States Senate, or the seal of the United States House of Representatives or the seal of the United States Congress.

All of this Congressional sausage-making leads us at least to the following musings:

- Do we get off with a slap on the wrist if we refer to “Smokey THE Bear?”
- Who or what the hey is “Woodsy Owl?”
- Do friends not let friends create a seal for the United States Supreme Court?
- Do you get a double fine and hard labor if you pollute using a federal seal?
- Where was OUR legislature in 1984 when Seymour D. Fair, our own abused World Expo mascot, needed their help?
- What poor sap did John McClindon bill for uncovering these little jewels?

And remember; only YOU can prevent federal crimes.